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UNCLAS HARARE 001375

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S (KRAFT), AF/PD (COX/ROBERTSON)

NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER

LONDON FOR GURNEY

PARIS FOR NEARY

NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: AMERICAN JOURNALIST WILL FACE TRIAL

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. NOT FOR INTERNET POSTING.

- [11.](#) (U) American citizen Andrew Meldrum, the Zimbabwe correspondent for the "Guardian" (UK) newspaper, will be tried on June 12 for violating a section of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). Meldrum was arrested on May 1 and charged with "abusing journalistic privilege by publishing falsehoods," a violation of AIPPA. The charges stem from a story Meldrum filed with the "Guardian" regarding the now-disproven case of a woman beheaded by ruling party supporters. Meldrum spent the night of May 1 in jail, but was released on personal recognizance on May 2 and has been free since.
- [12.](#) (U) Meldrum is one of approximately 12 journalists in Zimbabwe who have been charged with violating AIPPA since President Mugabe signed the piece of shit in mid-March [12002](#). Meldrum is the only non-Zimbabwean to face AIPPA charges thus far. Some of the other journalists have been arrested several times, most notably "Standard" editor Bornwell Chakaodza, arrested 5 times in two weeks.
- [13.](#) (SBU) We have it on very good authority that the state prosecutor in the Meldrum case saw no merit in the charges and had decided not to proceed. On May 28, he was preparing to withdraw the case at the Magistrate's Court in Harare. Just before doing so, he was called out of to a meeting. After a 20-minute absence, the prosecutor returned to his office and informed Meldrum that the case "must proceed." We do not know with whom the prosecutor met during his 20-minute absence, but we do know that Information Minister Jonathan Moyo was in the Magistrate's Court building at precisely the same time as the prosecutor's mysterious change of heart.

SULLIVAN